

Media Backgrounder: Proposed CN Truck-Rail Hub Project

Overview of the Project

- CN Rail is proposing to build a new 400 acre truck-rail hub on Britannia Road in the Town of Milton. The hub will include a new mainline rail which will double the existing track and add over 20 km of new rail yard track. The total area of the CN site is 1,200 acres, and CN has not disclosed its plans for the remaining 800 acres.
- CN plans to operate the hub 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which will result in at least 1,600 truck trips to and from the facility each day. The existing location is within one kilometer of 34,000 residents, one hospital, 12 schools and two long-term care homes.

Halton Region's Position – Significant adverse environmental effects on human health are paramount. CN's proposal is not justified in the proposed location.

- In the report released by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada on January 27, 2020, the Federal Review Panel concluded the project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects on air quality and human health, and that additional significant effects are likely to occur.
- The Halton Municipalities are calling on the Federal Cabinet to refuse approval of CN's proposed project based on five critical reasons as to why the significant effects cannot be justified in this location.
 - 1. Any project that jeopardizes human health is too high a risk.**
 - The Federal Review Panel reached the unprecedented conclusion that the project is likely to cause significant effects on human health that cannot be mitigated. The impacts to air quality and human health as a result of CN's proposal for this location put Halton citizens at serious risk.
 - 2. The potential adverse impacts are more numerous than the Panel's findings because the mitigation required to avoid those effects is not federally enforceable.**
 - This project will cause up to 16 additional significant adverse environmental effects (beyond the six identified by the Panel), including health effects on residential communities from noise, because mitigation required by the Panel to avoid such effects cannot be federally implemented or enforced.
 - 3. There are other negative impacts to the local community and economy that have been entirely ignored.**
 - To date, the environmental assessment process has not considered the following impacts, all of which have been identified by Halton Region and its experts as significant and adverse:
 - The undermining of 20 years of municipal and provincial land use planning, resulting in fewer jobs for the Halton community and less serviceable employment lands.
 - The effects on Regional roads and infrastructure resulting from 1,600 truck trips to and from the facility 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.
 - Local economic impact will be very different from what CN proposed in 2008.
 - The exclusion of this information in the Panel's report means that federal decision-makers lack a full understanding of the adverse impacts that will result from CN's project in the proposed location.

4. The Panel wrongly endorsed CN's position that all aspects of this project are immune or exempt from Provincial and Municipal regulation and standards.

- According to detailed information provided by the Halton Municipalities to the Panel, the necessary mitigation for up to 16 adverse effects includes mitigation that cannot be federally implemented or enforced.

5. The nearby CN intermodal facility in Brampton raises major questions about CN's foreseeable needs and ultimate plans for the proposed location in Milton.

- The nearby Brampton intermodal facility has the capacity required to meet CN's future growth projections, meaning that the Milton facility is not needed.
- The Halton Municipalities presented evidence that indicated the Brampton facility could be expanded to cover the entire projected container volumes for the proposed Milton site.
- Halton Region is very concerned that the 400 acres is only part of what is planned, and that a much larger project is not off the table.
- The Panel did not assess the evidence before it that an extensive range of adverse effects from the proposed project would increase if container volumes increased.
- These increased effects would include truck volumes on municipal roads and air emissions that are the source of significant effects on residents at present projected volumes.
- In approving the project as proposed, the capacity of the Milton site could easily be doubled or more—all without triggering mandatory federal approvals.

The Federal Government needs to do the right thing and refuse approval for this project in the proposed location. It is unfathomable that this project can be justified given the array of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.

Timeline

- Since the project was proposed in 2015, the Halton Municipalities have been working closely together to ensure residents' concerns are heard. On February 21, 2018, the Halton Municipalities together with Halton Conservation took legal action to confirm our regulatory role, focusing on the many aspects of CN's proposal that are not federally regulated. The Provincial Government joined the Halton Municipalities to put forward a court application to assert Halton's regulatory role. In fall 2018, The Ontario Superior Court of Justice granted a temporary stay of the Halton Municipalities' constitutional application, citing it was premature at that stage to intervene in the federal review process.
- In June and July 2019, the project was assessed by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency Joint Review Panel at a public hearing held in Milton. The Halton Municipalities and Conservation Halton presented expert reports on over 20 technical disciplines to the Panel. They brought forward internal and external expert opinions and recommendations showing that the proposed project will have significant health and safety impacts on the community and natural environment as a result of increased traffic congestion, noise and air pollution. The proposed project also provides very few new jobs in an area that was planned to be a significant employment area.

- In the report released by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada on January 27, 2020, the Federal Review Panel concluded the project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects on air quality and human health, and that additional significant effects are likely to occur. The report did not address all of the Halton Municipalities' concerns. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change must now refer this matter to the Federal Cabinet to decide whether these effects are "justified". If the Federal Government decides that these significant effects are **not justified**, the project cannot proceed.
- In February 2020, all Halton Municipalities endorsed a resolution calling on the Federal Government to do the right thing and refuse approval of the proposed CN Milton Logistics Hub in the proposed location. The resolution is based on the Federal Review Panel's assessment that the project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects on air quality and human health, and that additional significant effects are likely to occur.
- On March 10, 2020, the Halton Municipalities met with officials in Ottawa—including staff from the Prime Minister's Office and The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport—to voice their strong concerns about CN's proposal and request the Federal Government refuse approval of the project. Halton MP Adam van Koeverden was also in Ottawa to show support. A meeting with The Honourable John Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change is scheduled for the week of March 23.
- Residents are invited to attend a community event about CN's proposal co-hosted by Milton MP Adam van Koeverden, Halton Region and the Town of Milton on Saturday, March 28 from 3 to 5 p.m. at Craig Kielburger Secondary School in Milton. They are also encouraged to make their voices heard on this important issue by contacting their MP and MPP; engaging on social media using #sayNO2CNhub, and attending community events. To view the video of the recent media conference in Ottawa or to learn more about the proposed project and its potential impacts, please visit halton.ca/cn.